"Monsieur Gouffe", man-monkey: An early icon of the illegitimate theatre

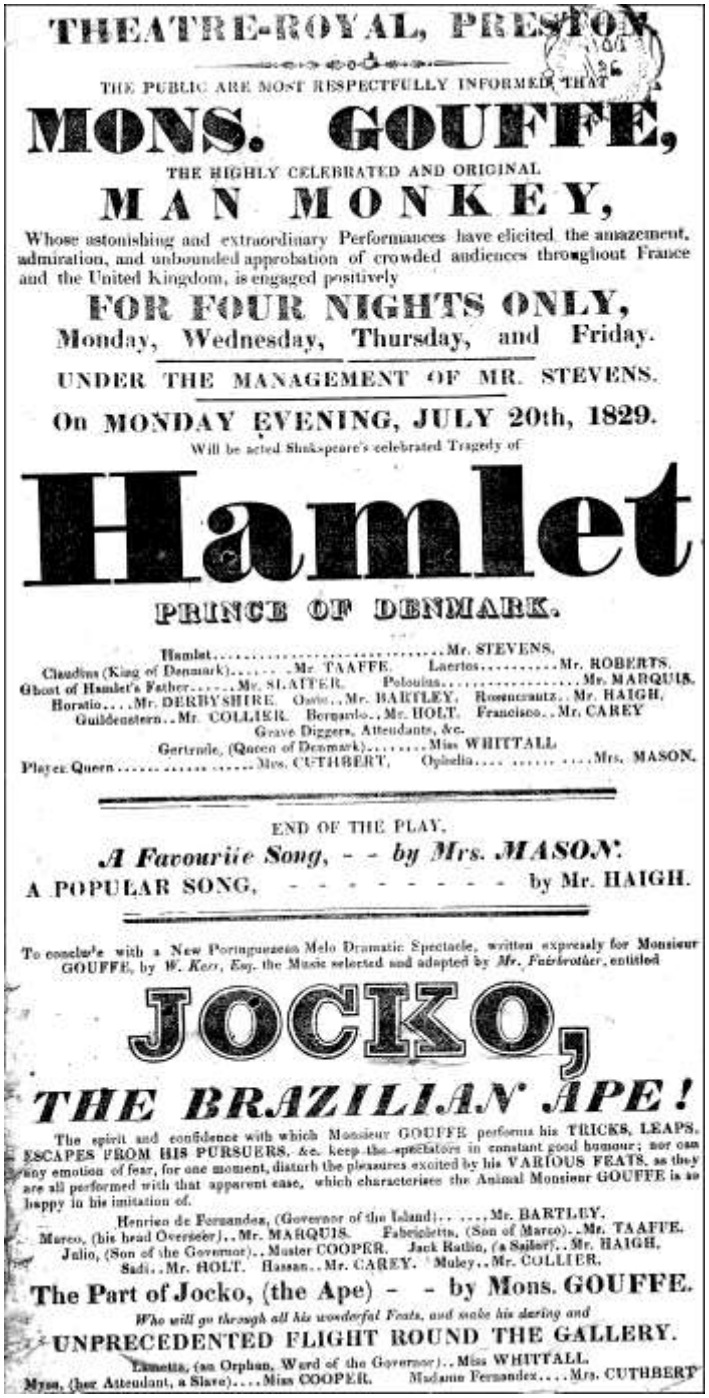
Bernard Ince

In the pantheon of illegitimate performers of the early nineteenth-century entertainment landscape in Britain, the artist whose sobriquet was "Monsieur Gouffe" deserves to figure more prominently alongside the better-known personages of the genre. Over an active career span of two decades from 1825 until 1845 (at home and abroad), Gouffe was widely regarded as an incomparable impersonator of the so-called "monkey tribe", a versatile artist whose slight physical appearance belied his strength and agility. Based on numerous reports, it is clear that Gouffe's astonishing exhibitions contributed significantly to the popular culture of the period and consequently, he justifies more thorough investigation. Accordingly, this paper presents a critical reassessment (not a strict career biography) of the Gouffe phenomenon primarily from a performance perspective, informed from disparate sources. These include contemporary accounts, newspaper reviews, playbills, original playtexts, and more recent scholarship. Although Gouffe's displays were grounded upon a simple template, they nevertheless transpired as more nuanced and original than that offered by many of his contemporaries and imitators, with few exceptions. His career must however be considered within the historical context of the origins and development of simian impersonations acts in general, a topic introduced in brief outline in the following section.

Genesis of Man-Monkey Acts

The somewhat bizarre visual spectacle of simian impersonation in the British entertainment context, be it on stage, at fairs, in circuses, or music halls, has a surprisingly long and complex history that has only recently been seriously addressed (Stockwell; Ince). Commonly referred to as "The Monkey Drama", it was E. L. Blanchard, the author of Drury Lane pantomimes**,** who first suggested the phenomenon warranted more attention (*Era*, 7 October 1882: 5). The spectacle of famous Regency actors such as Joe Grimaldi and Edmund Kean in simian garb, referred to by Jane Moody as "illegitimate celebrities" (208-41), have origins in English drama as far back as the Renaissance up to the Restoration. According to Anita Feinberg, these early displays were more commonly found in the masque and anti-masque to exclusive audiences, than on stage. Acts involving artists disguised in monkey suits that appeared in early nineteen-century Britain are thought however to have more directly originated in France in the mid-eighteenth century (like melodrama itself), as inferred by Diana Snigurowicz.[1] Well before the Theatres Act of 1843, and the polemics of the Darwinian debate (following release of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859) and the "missing link" trope, the early 1800s saw the beginning of the man-monkey vogue proper in Britain. This emerged in musical form (as burletta, a verbal form that encompassed melodrama) in the patent and minor theatres, and often juxtaposed on the same bill with the more legitimate drama (Figure 1). In a recent study I trace this largely unexplored entertainment genre from the early nineteenth century up to the 1920s in Britain from the perspective of the key melodramas that not only defined such acts, but also of the artists who pioneered them (Ince). An alternative account directed more at the general reader is given by Alan Stockwell who devotes useful individual chapters to narrative chronologies of the careers of certain of the better-known artists, Gouffe included (64-91). Although approaching the subject from different perspectives, these original contributions have revealed a multitude

of artists of differing specialisms (acrobats, gymnasts, pantomimists, equilibrists, contortionists etc.) who acted man-monkey roles, some specialising wholly in this form of entertainment (as did Gouffe), others found only occasionally in such roles. Of all the early pioneers in the man-monkey business, Gouffe has attracted greater comment than other performers, not only on account of the extraordinary nature and originality of his exhibitions, but also on account of his persona. Consequently, an air of mystery has surrounded this performer, a fact responsible for much speculation as to his true identity, a topic briefly reviewed in the following section.



THEATRE-ROYAL, PRESTON.

THE PUBLIC ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INFORMED, THAT

MONS. GOUFFE,

THE HIGHLY CELEBRATED AND ORIGINAL

MAN MONKEY,

Whose astonishing and extraordinary Performances have elicited the amazement, admiration, and unbounded approbation of crowded audiences throughout France and the United Kingdom, is engaged positively

FOR FOUR NIGHTS ONLY,

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF MR. STEVENS.

On MONDAY EVENING, JULY 20th, 1829.

Will be acted Shakspeare's celebrated Tragedy of

Hamlet

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

Hamlet.....Mr. STEVENS.
Claudius (King of Denmark).....Mr. TAAFFE. Laertes.....Mr. ROBERTS.
Ghost of Hamlet's Father.....Mr. SLATTER. Polonius.....Mr. MARQUIS.
Horatio....Mr. DERBYSHIRE. Osric..Mr. BARTLEY. Rosencrantz..Mr. HAIGH.
Guildenstern..Mr. COLLIER. Bernardo..Mr. HOLT. Francisco..Mr. CAREY
Grave Diggers, Attendants, &c.
Gertrude, (Queen of Denmark).....Miss WHITTALL
Player Queen.....Mrs. CUTHBERT. Ophelia.....Mrs. MASON.

END OF THE PLAY,

A Favourite Song, - - by Mrs. MASON.

A POPULAR SONG, - - - - - - - - - by Mr. HAIGH.

To conclude with a New Portuguezean Melo Dramatic Spectacle, written expressly for Monsieur GOUFFE, by *W. Kerr, Esq.* the Music selected and adapted by *Mr. Fairbrother*, entitled

JOCKO,

THE BRAZILIAN APE!

The spirit and confidence with which Monsieur GOUFFE performs his TRICKS, LEAPS, ESCAPES FROM HIS PURSUERS, &c. keep the spectators in constant good humour; nor can any emotion of fear, for one moment, disturb the pleasures excited by his VARIOUS FEATS, as they are all performed with that apparent ease, which characterises the Animal Monsieur GOUFFE is so happy in his imitation of.

Henrico de Fernandez, (Governor of the Island).....Mr. BARTLEY.
Marco, (his head Overseer)..Mr. MARQUIS. Fabrichetta, (Son of Marco)..Mr. TAAFFE.
Julio, (Son of the Governor)..Master COOPER. Jack Ratlin, (a Sailor)..Mr. HAIGH.
Sadi..Mr. HOLT. Hassan..Mr. CAREY. Muley..Mr. COLLIER.

The Part of Jocko, (the Ape) - - by Mons. GOUFFE.

Who will go through all his wonderful Feats, and make his daring and

UNPRECEDENTED FLIGHT ROUND THE GALLERY.

Lametta, (an Orphan, Ward of the Governor)..Miss WHITTALL.
Myra, (her Attendant, a Slave)....Miss COOPER. Madame Fernandez....Mrs. CUTHBERT

Figure 1. Playbill for performances at the Theatre Royal, Preston for the week beginning 20 July 1829, with Gouffe's name typically heading the bill, and featuring in the afterpiece of *Jocko, The Brazilian Ape* following the main piece, Shakespeare's *Hamlet Prince of Denmark*. Lancashire Archives, Preston, UK (Catalogue Reference DDPR/28/6 No 60)

A question of identity

Earlier academic interest in Gouffe may be traced back to successive brief notes by Laurence Senelick and Derek Forbes. The former concluded that Gouffe's " 'low' origins and his earthy *emploi* as an anthropoid seem to have removed him from the historian's field of vision", while Forbes, quoting from William Knight's account of the Surrey Theatre, concluded that Gouffe "deserves his own niche in history" (Knight 147). These issues have been more recently reiterated and expanded on by Stockwell (65-68), but much of what is known of Gouffe (strictly Gouffé, erroneously Gouffee, Goff, Gough, and Guffey), lies buried within the edited memoirs of Charles Dibdin the Younger who was manager of the Surrey Theatre between 1824 and 1826 when Gouffe first appears (Speaight 141-57). Crucially, Dibdin not only had first-hand experience of Gouffe, he also wrote several early pieces specifically for him during his tenure of the theatre. Dibdin's recollections of Gouffe are reiterated by Knight (46, 147) who asserted additionally that Gouffe's name was adopted by two different individuals, this being the root of myth, misinformation and speculation that has always surrounded him.

The first incarnation was John Hornshaw who, after retirement, was followed by Sam Todd (from South America) in 1837 who "transformed into Monsieur Gouffé" (Stirling 198). The latter's alleged existence is based on brief comments made in Edward Stirling's own recollections of Gouffe, an account that lacks credibility, and is now largely debunked. There is yet a further account of the original Gouffe not referred to in these sources and this concern a Master Vale who was allegedly remembered by the eccentric showman John ("Jack") Richardson as the once-famous Gouffe. Richardson's thoughts are recounted in the following passage from Thomas Frost's *The Old Showmen*:

> His real name was Vale . . . following the humble occupation of a pot-boy in a low public-house [who] amused the guests by walking about on pewter pint measures, with his hob-nailed boots turned towards the smoke-begrimed ceiling. The performance was a novel one [and] after travelling with Richardson for some time, Vale appeared at several of the minor theatres of the metropolis, always in the part of an ape, and under the assumed name of Gouffe. His pantomimic powers were considerable, and his agility was scarcely inferior to that of the four-handed brutes whom he represented. (306)

And yet other accounts add to the confusion by suggesting that it was Vale of the Surrey (Charles Dibdin's *buffo caricato*) that actually discovered Gouffe (see, for example, *London Dispatch*, 8 October 1837: 3), indicative of the complete confusion that has prevailed. I am therefore inclined to dismiss the majority of second-hand accounts as wholly unreliable. Although the latter passage from Richardson has at least some ring of authenticity about it, it has not been possible to corroborate his recollections in any other source. This notwithstanding, the inescapable fact (from the official death records) is that the John (Finchett) Hornshaw who died at Charing Cross Hospital on 10 February 1846 was none other than the artist known as Gouffe, additional evidence for which is presented below. Dibdin moreover, in his memoirs, also refers to John Hornshaw as the individual he claimed to have given the "assumed foreign name" of Gouffé to (Speaight 146), thus lending further weight to Gouffe being of singular identity.[2] Of Gouffe's physical and mental attributes, features that would have impacted significantly on his ability to perform his punishing routines, only scattered accounts exist, but they offer clues as to the more fundamental challenges he faced in a demanding line of business and are therefore worthy of consideration.

A question of disability

Besides perpetrating the dual-identity myth, Stirling described Gouffe as "a coarse, uneducated fellow" whose "career was short, and curious" (197). Dibdin noted that Gouffe "presented such a squalid appearance; limped (one of his legs being shorter than the other, through a constriction of the instep) and could scarcely speak intelligibly" (Speaight 145). The *Sussex Advertiser* (28 March 1836: 4) however while similarly remarking on Gouffe's "half-witted manners and conversation . . . [that lead us] to believe that he was almost an idiot", nevertheless acknowledged, significantly, that:

> his performances are not merely imitations of the peculiarity of the animal he 'personates', but he introduces a spirit of genuine acting, even into this *illegitimate* department of the drama. In the "Ape of Brazil" his dying scene (in its way) is as great an effort as [Edmund] Kean's in [Shakespeare's] Richard [III].

Gouffe was also remembered on the Dundee stage as "sadly stunted in height, and, to a certain extent, deformed. He had, besides, a sad impediment in his speech" (Boyd 32-33; *Dundee Courier*, 1 October 1885: 4).[3] In his book on Joe Grimaldi, Richard Findlater also disparagingly refers to Gouffe as a "half-imbecile pot-boy" (23), and by the actor-manager John Coleman as one whose:

> standard of intelligence [was] but one stage removed from the brute he impersonated. Indeed, if ever the Darwinian theory needed corroborative testimony, it might surely have been found in the person of Monsieur Gouffe. (143-4)

At the Surrey in *The Island Ape* (dramatist unknown), came the comment that Gouffe had:

> one leg shorter than the other, his figure awkward, near sighted, and nearly as deaf as a post . . . [but] notwithstanding these misfortunes his strength, and surprising agility, excite the wonder and admiration of every beholder. (*Theatrical Observer*, 19 October 1825)

The question as to the extent of Gouffe's inferred physical disability and/or mental impairment, and the potential impact of this on his performance ability, is interesting and important to consider. It falls within the domain of exhibiting freakish or deformed bodies in general as marketable commodities for popular consumption, but in Gouffe's case, caution must be exercised in reading too much into this aspect. Certainly, given the longevity and transnational nature of his career, and the fact that references to his infirmity are confined to the off-stage Gouffe and not his performances, it is tempting to suggest that its degree was slight. Nevertheless, parlaying any degree of physical disability into physical prowess is impressive. However, further interrogation in these regards is problematic in Gouffe's case, and open to speculation through lack of sufficient information.[4] In the wider context of freak discourse, and the communication of evolutionary themes through performed entertainments in the age of Darwin, it is nevertheless important to underscore that Gouffe was neither considered a "freak", nor were his exhibitions ever advertised as "freak shows" or "ethnological shows". According to Jane R. Goodall, these situated the spectator "somewhere ambiguously between science and entertainment" (83), and "were supposed to inform their audiences about the stages of human evolutionary development" (88). Further, as also noted by Nadja Durbach:

> popular freak show acts . . . capitalised on late nineteenth century preoccupations with the interrelationships among Darwinism, imperialism, and the sexuality of the "primitive" body . . . Throughout the nineteenth century, popular understandings of evolutionary theory structured audiences' approach to the freak show, as the anomalous bodies on display were often interpreted as "steps in the evolutionary ladder", or "throwbacks" to earlier forms. (89-90)

Of Gouffe's assumed short career, Stirling was wide of the mark, revealing perhaps a prejudicial streak that was common in those who considered such illegitimate performers more fitting for the circus than the legitimate stage, and whose performances "epitomised cultural lowness and aesthetic spuriousness of illegitimate theatre " (Moody 87). This sentiment bedevilled most man-monkey artists from time to time, but more especially those of high profile and ubiquity such as Gouffe. But such criticism never stunted Gouffe's career, and he performed in all venues, the circus arena included, as illustrated by the playbill shown in Figure 2. Even in America, where he performed between 1831 and 1835, he occasionally prompted isolated criticism. Thus, for example, while conceding that "Many of his feats are indeed astonishing", the *Boston Masonic Mirror* (3 December 1831: 183) nevertheless concluded of his performance at the Tremont Theatre that they "add little to the dignity of the stage [and] constitute no part of the legitimate drama". In a theatrical biography, the author, noting the "difference of value between intellectual and physical acting", rued the fact that an "actor received from the citizens of Philadelphia, on his benefit night, 140 dollars, while the man-monkey [Gouffe], on the previous night, received 444 dollars. *O tempora! O mores!*" (Wemyss 220).

Because Stockwell's narrative chronology – valuable though it is - makes it difficult to immediately grasp the essentials of Gouffe's main performances over time, a tabulated, self-explanatory summary of these are to be found in the Appendix at the end of this paper. When reviewing this list it is worth noting that Gouffe's acts were either incidental demonstrations that simply showed off his gymnastic ability (and were sometimes included for light relief as part of a play), or melodramas, ballet pantomimes (*ballet d'action*), and pantomimic spectacles, that had a plot and an often substantial cast. These dramas were not only repeated numerous times, and at many different venues, the titles, *mise en scène* and *dramatis personae* were often subtly modified when it was considered necessary to show off Gouffe in

a new light. In the following section I introduce the period of Gouffe's emergence, and the intersection of his early career with that of a famous French artist who was approaching the end of his career, events that were played out through the memorable personage of Jocko.

Figure 2. Playbill for mixed entertainments at Ryan's Royal Circus, Cheltenham, on 8 February 1841, with Gouffe heading the bill in *Jocko the Brazilian Ape*.
The Cheltenham Trust and Cheltenham Borough Council (Catalogue Reference Playbill No. 3105)

Jocko and the cult of the "good monkey"

Although Jocko had antecedents - the earliest man-monkey dramas appeared in Britain several decades before,[5] - it's influence on the future development of the genre was immense, extending as it did beyond the end of the nineteenth century. While other monkey characters became popular such as Marmazette in C. Pelham Thompson's *The Dumb Savoyard and his Monkey* (Drury Lane, 1828), or Mushapug ("The Island Monkey" substituting for the role of "man Friday") in *Jack Robinson and His Monkey* (Surrey, 1828), they never attained Jocko's status as a cultural icon. As I remarked in my earlier study on simian impersonation, Jocko "probably represents the apotheosis of the genre . . . [and] as the selfless, anthropomorphized hero of the piece, the character of Jocko attained a strange and enduring celebrity . . . [which] demanded considerable dramatic skill" (Ince 360-61).

The celebrated French posture-master Charles-Francois Mazurier, principally a comic actor and pantomimist (not a dedicated monkey skin-artist), performed the first dramatic rendition of Jocko in Jules Joseph Gabriel de Lurieu and Claude Louis Marie de Rochefort-Lucay's adaptation from Charles de Pougens's novella of 1824 entitled *Jocko, ou le Singe du Brésil*, at the theatre of Porte Saint-Martin in Paris on 16 March 1825.[6] According to the *Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres* (12 November 1825: 733), "the French were delighted, and owing to his success, monkey hats, and monkey bonnets, and monkey every things became the rage". Described in the original French playtext as a "drame et deux actes, a grand spectacle, mêlée de musique, de danses et de pantomime" (item b2237677x in the Restoration Drama section, Marandet Collection at the University of Warwick) Mazurier repeated the role at Covent Garden under Charles Kemble the following November (*Theatrical Observer,* 8 November 1825). This version was written by J. R. Planché ("Lord Chamberlain's Plays August-October 1825"; Nicoll 378), and in coming to London at this time, Mazurier (who died in 1828) became a direct - albeit short-lived - competitor of Gouffe

who was at the very beginning of his career. The iconic image shown in Figure 3 is symbolic of one key aspect of the man-monkey phenomenon, immortalised by Jocko, namely that of the "good monkey", who although a liminal creature is nevertheless the antithesis of the mutant savage Other prone to violence. In this context, Jocko is instead emblematic of the selfless, noble simian prepared to sacrifice its life in the protection of others, usually children; primitive yet incorruptible. This is a theme laden with pathos not to be found in other monkey dramas, sufficient to guarantee the shedding of many a tear from audiences. In Planché's version (not dissimilar to the French original), the exchange between the child saved by Jocko, and Fernandez, the child's father (who has mistaken the monkey's good intentions), consumes the very last scene. The passage appears trivial in play script but offered ample scope to be drawn out to spectacular effect on stage:

FERNANDEZ: A monkey that had seized my child!

CHILD: No, no father, he would not have hurt me – he saved me from a frightful snake, and now see – poor thing!

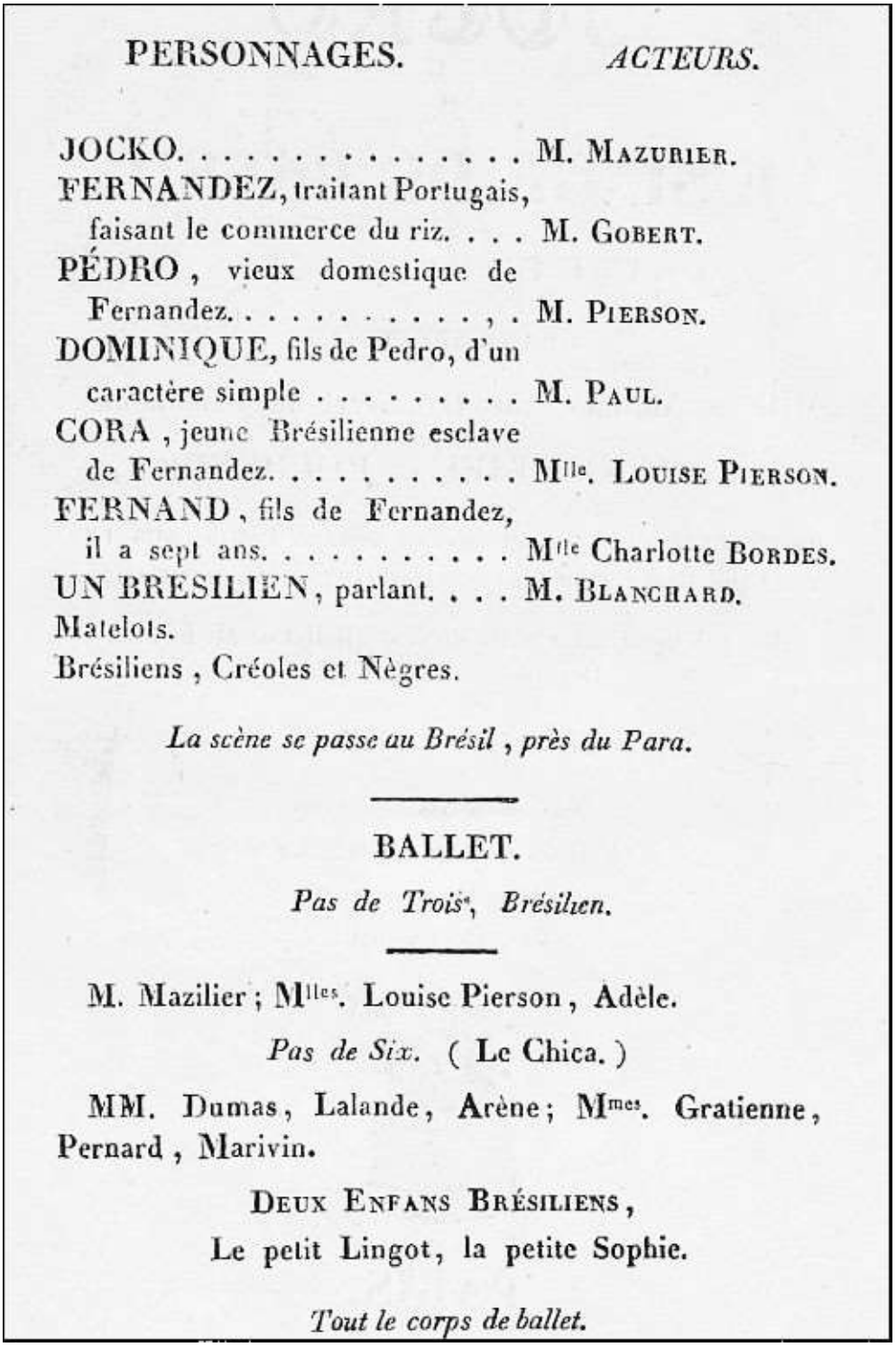
FERNANDEZ: Hah! (Turning he sees Jocko, mortally wounded) A pitiful sight! 'tis my poor Jocko! – Alas! Alas! His preservation of my child has cost him his life! Jocko! My poor Jocko!

(Jocko turns a last look upon Fernandez and expires)

FERNANDEZ: He dies! He dies! (Music) (Picture) (Curtain falls)

Figure 3. Charles-Francois Mazurier as Jocko, protecting little Fernand from a snake, the child pleading "Jocko sauve moi" ("Jocko save me!"). Title vignette, and frontis, taken from the original French playtext. Reproduced courtesy of the Marandet Collection, University of Warwick.

As one advertisement for *Jocko* at the Belfast Theatre declared: "He [Gouffe] will conclude with the celebrated Scene, in which his representation of A DYING MONKEY is justly considered one of the most triumphant specimens of art ever witnessed" (*Belfast Northern Whig*, 10 February 1838: 3). In even more hyperbolic terms is the newspaper advertisement extolling Gouffe's dying scene as Jocko as the "finest effort of Dramatic Genius ever attempted", on par even with that of David Garrick or Kean (*Leeds Times*, 28 October 1843: 5). In the latter respect it is worth recalling that Kean himself had played Chimpanzee *Perouse* at Waterford on his benefit night and "in this character he showed great agility scarcely since surpassed by Mazurier or Gouffe, and touches of deep tragedy in the monkey's death-scene which made the audience shed tears" (Hawkins 93). This evocation of the good or noble monkey is a theme central to the Jocko cult, and foundational in many simian-based dramas throughout the nineteenth century.[7] Another key aspect of the man-monkey phenomenon, and one that commonly co-exists with the hero figure, is that of the innocent, playful, almost childlike creature often mimicking its (colonial) master. This is found for example in probably the most popular and enduring of all monkey dramas, even surpassing Jocko, namely *Jack Robinson and his Monkey* referred to earlier, which is loosely based on the Robinson Crusoe theme.[8] Referring again to Mazurier's original Jocko depicted in Figure 3, it is of interest also to show the *dramatis personae* for this very first production in England (Figure 4), published as part of the playtext, because it offers clues as to the dramaturgy of the piece which constituted the template for all subsequent Jocko productions and interpretations.



PERSONNAGES. *ACTEURS.*

JOCKO. . . . . M. MAZURIER.
FERNANDEZ, traitant Portugais, faisant le commerce du riz. . . . M. GOBERT.
PÉDRO, vieux domestique de Fernandez. . . . . M. PIERSON.
DOMINIQUE, fils de Pedro, d'un caractère simple . . . . . M. PAUL.
CORA, jeune Brésilienne esclave de Fernandez. . . . . Mlle. LOUISE PIERSON.
FERNAND, fils de Fernandez, il a sept ans. . . . . Mlle Charlotte BORDES.
UN BRESILIEN, parlant. . . . M. BLANCHARD.
Matelots.
Brésiliens, Créoles et Nègres.

La scène se passe au Brésil, près du Para.

BALLET.

Pas de Trois, Brésilien.

M. Mazilier; Mlles. Louise Pierson, Adèle.

Pas de Six. (Le Chica.)

MM. Dumas, Lalande, Arène; Mmes. Gratienne, Pernard, Marivin.

DEUX ENFANS BRÉSILIENS,
Le petit Lingot, la petite Sophie.

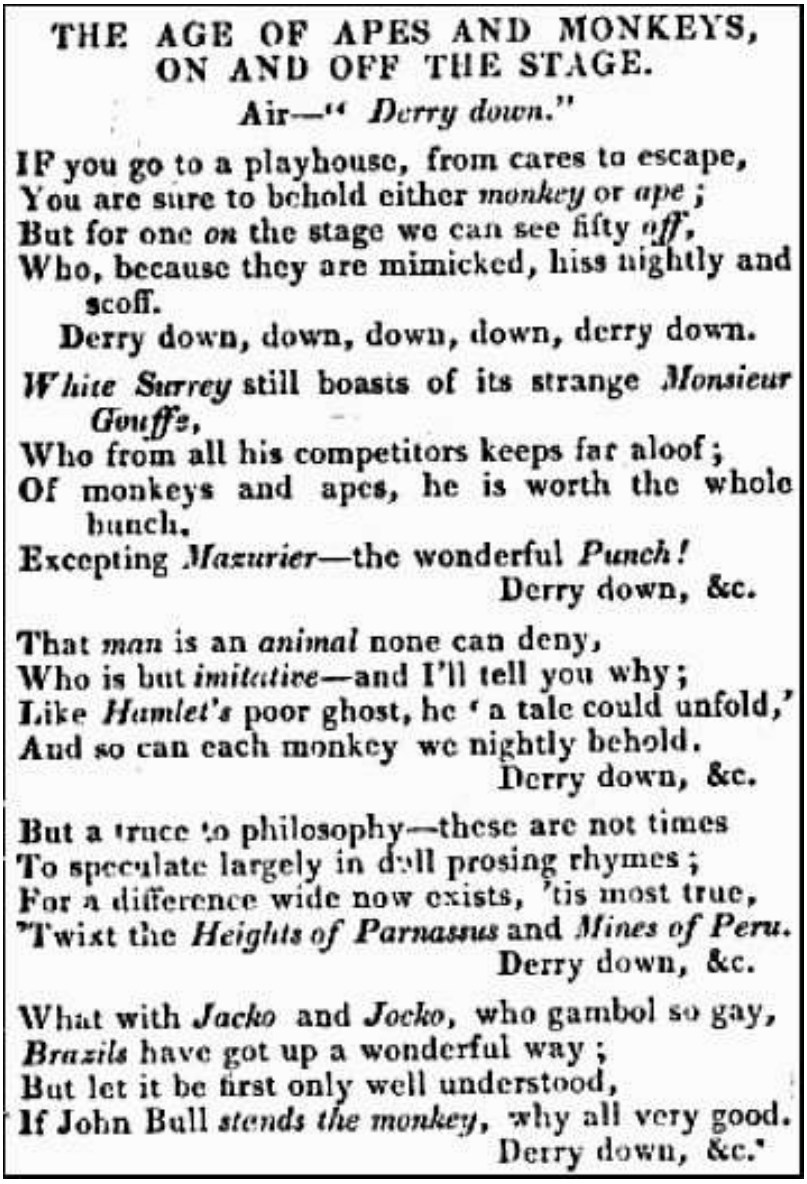
Tout le corps de ballet.

Figure 4. *Dramatis personae* for *Jocko, ou le Singe du Brésil* enacted in Paris in March 1825, with Mazurier as Jocko. Image from the original French playtext. Reproduced courtesy of the Marandet Collection, University of Warwick.

Allardyce Nicoll remarks that such was Mazurier's success as Jocko in London, his role was satirised by Planché, in his burlesque *Success; or, A Hit if you like it*, performed at the Adelphi in December 1825, in which the heroine Success declares:

> There's fifty young men have told me their fine tales,
> And called me their fairest she;
> But of all the gay fellows that sport on the green,
> Young Jocko's the lad for me.
> He tumbles and capers, and climbs up a tree;
> He scratches himself with his toes;
> He looks to a monkey as like as can be,
> When he puts on his pasteboard nose! (Nicoll 26, 378)

Gouffe and Mazurier also found themselves the subject of the comic and satirical verse, as illustrated in Figure 5.[9]



THE AGE OF APES AND MONKEYS,
ON AND OFF THE STAGE.

Air—" *Derry down.*"

IF you go to a playhouse, from cares to escape,
You are sure to behold either *monkey* or *ape*;
But for one *on* the stage we can see fifty *off*,
Who, because they are mimicked, hiss nightly and scoff.
Derry down, down, down, down, derry down.

White Surrey still boasts of its strange *Monsieur Gouffe*,
Who from all his competitors keeps far aloof;
Of monkeys and apes, he is worth the whole bunch,
Excepting *Mazurier*—the wonderful *Punch!*
Derry down, &c.

That *man* is an *animal* none can deny,
Who is but *imitative*—and I'll tell you why;
Like *Hamlet's* poor ghost, he 'a tale could unfold,'
And so can each monkey we nightly behold.
Derry down, &c.

But a truce to philosophy—these are not times
To speculate largely in dull prosing rhymes;
For a difference wide now exists, 'tis most true,
'Twixt the *Heights of Parnassus* and *Mines of Peru*.
Derry down, &c.

What with *Jacko* and *Jocko*, who gambol so gay,
Brazils have got up a wonderful way;
But let it be first only well understood,
If John Bull *stands the monkey*, why all very good.
Derry down, &c.

Figure 5. Comical verse dedicated to Gouffe and Mazurier. *The Universal Songster* Volume Three (London: John Fairburn; Simpkin and Marshall; and Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1826).

Goodall has commented that "Through [its] symmetrical and sentimental plot, *Jocko* emphasises a fundamental equivalence between ape and human [which] effectively founded a genre of monkey-man productions . . . all serving as vehicles for pantomime artists and acrobats wanting to showcase their versatility" (50-52).

Jocko comes to England – and stays for good

Charles Dibdin's first Jocko (*Jocko; or, the Ourang Outang of Brazil*) was produced at the Surrey Theatre on Monday 6 June 1825. As to the authorship of this Jocko version, in his memoirs, Dibdin remarked "I received, I believe, the first copy of it that was brought to England [from Paris]; and that copy was brought me express" (Speaight 144). The part of the monkey was enacted briefly by no less than three players in turn (M. Simon, John Kirby and Tom Ridgway) within a month, this immediately prior to Gouffe's appearance. In the same week at Sadler's Wells, a rival version of Jocko (*Jocko; or, the Ape of Brazil*) was written and produced by younger brother Thomas Dibdin (who published his own reminiscences) with J. S. Grimaldi as the monkey (*Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 12 June 1825: 190; Nicoll 304). The Sadler's Wells performance however is not explicitly referred to in Charles Dibdin's memoirs (other than to remark that he "anticipated the other Theatres in its production"), but added as a footnote by Speaight (144) who notes the incorrect date (10 June) stated in Thomas Dibdin's reminiscences. The latter merely records "On the 10th June, I brought out the French melo-drame of 'Jocko, the Brazilian Ape' " (Dibdin 317), the term "melo-drame" being indicative of early melodrama's "use of music consistently throughout the presentation . . . occasionally border[ing] upon a Ballet" (Donohue 108).

Gouffe's first appearance at the Surrey occurred on Monday 4 July 1825 in a demonstration role as part of a Jocko performance in which the monkey was played by Kirby (*London Morning Advertiser*, 4 July 1825: 2). Jocko was repeated the following week but with Ridgway in the monkey part, and Gouffe again demonstrating (*London Morning Advertiser*, 11 July 1825: 2). Gouffe's dramatic debut at the Surrey occurred on Monday 18 July 1825 in the role of the Ape in *Juan Fernandez; or, the Island Ape*, a one-act (undocumented) ballet pantomime by Ridgway (*London Morning Advertiser*, 18 July 1825: 2; Knight 46; Nicoll 486). The story, according to Charles Dibdin, "was from that of

Alexander Selkirk; from which it is said, Defoe took his idea of *Robinson Crusoe*" (Speaight 147), and it appears to have been advertised simply as *The Island Ape* thereafter (Stockwell 74). Gouffe had in fact been earmarked by Charles Dibdin in the role of Chimpanzee in *Perouse*, the earliest and arguably most influential of the simian-based dramas (Ince 358-60), but as Dibdin records, "so idiotic, did he [Gouffe] appear, we could devise no method by which to teach him; he could understand nothing" (Speaight 145-7). Nevertheless, Gouffe persevered, developing a method of recording each scene in hieroglyphic form as understudy while Ridgway practised the part. According to Dibdin, Gouffe then "took the place of his substitute (Ridgway) and went through the business with the greatest exactitude; and on the first night of the performance of the piece . . . went on the Stage in full possession of what he had to do". The inference from this passage is that Gouffe did eventually play the role of Chimpanzee in *Perouse* in 1825 under Dibdin and yet no record of this performance can be found, the earliest being at the Theatre Royal, Brighton in 1826 (*Brighton Gazette*, 5 October 1826: 2).

In an interesting assessment of Gouffe's performing merits at the Surrey (which given the date, refers to the ballet pantomime, *The Island Ape*) , the *London Evening Mail* argued that he was much more than just a man in a monkey suit, but one who could act, a fact noted earlier, and a key attribute that distinguished Gouffe from almost all other man-monkey artists of his time:

> There is a very singular person, who calls himself Monsieur Gouffe, playing the character of a monkey just now at this house. He is a tumbler and posture-master of great power and activity, but unites with those requisites a faculty which almost all his brother artists are deficient of – considerable whim and dexterity as an actor . . . [he] acts the part of his ape very curiously. In point of strength and agility, many of his feats are highly surprising; and, taken combined with the spirit of his pantomime acting, the whole is the best thing of the kind perhaps that has appeared. (1 August 1825: 2)

Of his performance in *Jocko the Brazilian Ape* at Exeter, the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* similarly commented that while the merits of *Jocko* as a drama were trivial:

> the tricks and surprising feats of *Jocko* keep up an undiminishing interest . . . So natural are Mons. Gouffe's imitations of the manners of the animal he represents, that the spectator loses all idea of the *man* in admiration of the *ape*; indeed, but for his size, a stranger to such an exhibition might almost suppose that he was a tamed inhabitant of the woods, brought by tuition to perform the feats he achieves . . . the wonderful display of muscular power and activity of this performer . . . is to be seen & wondered at, not expressed. (30 January 1830: 2)

Because Mazurier and Gouffe were direct competitors, comparisons of performance style were inevitable. In his memoirs, Charles Dibdin remarked that:

> During the Season that Mazurier performed at Covent Garden, he came to the Surrey to see Gouffé, and after seeing him, bore testimony to his merit. Mazurier could accomplish things which Gouffé could not; and *vice versa*; but the latter possessed an advantage over the former, in his extraordinary strength; through which he performed some astonishing acts; one of which, inserting his feet in two staples at the top of a perpendicular beam, 10 or 12 feet high, he extended his body horizontally from the Beam, by mere strength of muscle, without any support whatever. (Speaight 146-7)

Several years after Mazurier's death in 1828, when Gouffe was performing at Teignmouth, the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* commented:

> His performance certainly is more natural than Mazurier's, and his feats more extraordinary. Unrivalled as he is now, we think no one could have studied the nature of monkeys more accurately: he has their manner – their squeak (which Mazurier had not), and his *monkey*'s dying scene, without *ape*-ing [Edmund] Kean, is certainly as good a piece of pantomime-acting as the other Richard [III]. (23 January 1830:3)

A decade later, of Gouffe's performances at the Southampton Theatre in *Jack Robinson*, which alludes to a unique feature of his performance portfolio to be covered shortly, the *Hampshire Advertiser* remarked:

> We recollect poor Mazurier was reported to have studied the life, character, and behaviour of monkeys in the *jardin des plantes*, we opine Gouffe has practiced in their native woods, for besides all we ever did see monkeys perform, this artist does much more – he suspends himself by a rope round his neck, without risking the fate of Sam Scott – hangs by his heels – while young gentlemen exclaim "thereby hangs a tale" . . . Gouffe's performance is very extraordinary – his mask alone is worth going into the boxes, if not into the woods to see. (13 March 1841: 2)

Absolute comparisons between Mazurier and Gouffe however are problematic, as indeed would be the case with other like artists on account of the paucity of detail found in the typical review, but often compensated for by eye-catching playbill iconography as seen in Figure 6.[10] Gouffe's career span also inevitably overlapped with other notable artists of the early to mid-nineteenth century in Britain, though not all were dedicated man-monkeys. By any account, these would include the likes of E. J. Parsloe (a nimble dancer with a comic touch who appeared shortly after Gouffe at the Surrey in 1828), George Wieland (principally a pantomimist of supreme ability), William Plimmeri (a dedicated man-monkey), Edward Klishnig - described as more "India rubber" than Mazurier (*Morning Advertiser*, 10 June 1829: 3), and Frederick Martini, mooted as Gouffe's successor (*Era*, 14 February 1847: 10). However, while they shared prerequisite skills of flexibility and agility, and undoubtedly contributed in their own way in setting performance benchmarks, I would contend that few

ever managed to inspire the degree of interest generated by Gouffe, nor match his true dramatic and interpretative ability in seemingly trivial roles. As was noted in a review of an early Gouffe performance when first at the Surrey:

> He is a tumbler and posture-master of great power and activity, but unites with those requisites a faculty which almost all his brother artists are deficient of – considerable whim and dexterity as an actor. The fault of most jumpers . . . is that their performance amounts merely to a series of feats, and therefore becomes tedious; but Mr. Gouffe has reformed that mistake altogether, and *acts* the part of his ape very curiously. (*London Evening Mail*, 1 August 1825: 2)

Five years later at Exeter, Gouffe's powers remain undiminished, and beyond his obvious agility and wide range of actions, was a "knowing" quality of his relationship to the audience:

> the imitation of that vivacious and cunning animal was given to the life. It was not the mere playing of monkey tricks which so many boobies can do; but it was the *beau ideal* of what monkeys . . . should be . . . The tricks had all a moral purposes in them . . . The wag of the paw – the leer of comical and roguish delight at the consummation of some mischievous feat, the astonishing agility. (*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 12 June 1830: 3)

Such general remarks however do little justice to the sheer originality and artistry of a typical Gouffe performance. Fortunately however, one account exists – reviewed in the following section - that permits an in-depth exploration of the minutiae of his act.

THEATRE
SANS SOUCI,
LEICESTER SQUARE.
SMYTHSON
ANNOUNCES
ON MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY,
June 6th, 8th, and 10th, present a
GRAND DRESSED REHEARSAL.
To gratify his patrons he has at an immense expence made arrangements with that PHENOMENON,
Mons. GOUFFE
CLUBS & DIAMONDS,
Sir Charles Rackett Mr. SPENCER
Draggett Mr. WALL,
Dimity Mrs. SMYTHSON,
A Comic Song by Mr. Widdicomb, a Broad-Sword Hornpipe by Master Kirby, and a Comic Song by Mr. Souter.
A Grand Pas de Deux by the Misses Lucas, from Sadler's Wells.
SELKIRK & THE SAVAGE,
OR THE APE OF THE CAVERN;
Jerry the Ape . . Mons. GOUFFE,
Journey round the front of the Theatre and celebrated Dance with Pint Pots.
SINGEING SHORT,
Mr. WALL,
Mr SPENCER,
Mrs. SMYTHSON,

Figure 6. Playbill for performances at the Sans Souci Theatre under the proprietorship of (Benjamin Christian) Smythson, showing a (woodblock) image of Gouffe as Jerry the Ape in horizontal extension in *Selkirk & The Savage; or, the Ape of the Cavern*. The attributed year for this event is 1825 but evidence points to 1830 or later (see footnote). By courtesy of Laurence Senelick Collection from his personal collection.

Nuance and Originality in Performance

The longest and most detailed description of a Gouffe performance, from early in his career, offers a rare insight into the essence of what made him a sensation in the realm of illegitimate performances of the early nineteenth century in Britain. It begins:

> We arrived last week attracted to the Surrey Theatre by the marvels
> we had heard of M. Gouffe, a Frenchman [sic], who performs the part of
> a large ape, in a ballet-pantomime affair called the "Island Ape."
> (*Cumberland Pacquet*, 6 September 1825: 4)

Playbills commonly declared (in one way or another) that his "delineation of the *character* [of a simian] is such as frequently to occasion doubt in the audience, whether he is a man or a monkey". The melodrama *The Island Ape* being referred to plays out a colonial encounter of sorts heavily influenced by the *Perouse* theme. It conforms to a simple scenario - replicated and modified many times in differing formats - of an individual (in this case a Lieut. Selkirk) shipwrecked on a desolate island (a classically gothic theme laden with appropriate atmospherics), who is attacked by natives, then rescued at the last moment by a landing party of compatriots, but not without some entertaining interludes from the "Island Ape". The plot in general therefore merely serves as a vehicle for simian histrionics. The description of Gouffe's physical appearance (or indeed of any man-monkey artist) is a rarity in newspaper reviews, and the one in the *Cumberland Pacquet* goes on to conform to Charles Dibdin's observations, and those of others, noted earlier. It reveals that he was:

> short, thin, and spare, even meagre in his make . . . one of his legs appears
> to us to be rather shorter than its fellow. He wears a mask sufficiently
> hideous to be very like his frightful prototype, and is clothed with a light
> hirsute dress, that not unaptly represents the hairy covering of the *simia satyrus*,
> and other species of apes, as well as monkeys.

Among the most striking observations of his physical frame, the review remarks, "none is more astonishing than the little apparent relation between the prodigious bodily powers which he displays, and the unpromising aspect of his small and slight figure". As for the tricks he performs, "He jumps upon and off a table with an incessant, rapid, whirling motion, that is really so like that velocity of action which one observes in these beasts". Gouffe now moves to his next favourite trick, this being with pewter pint pots, found in this case amongst Selkirk's effects. The *Cumberland Pacquet* goes on:

> He jumps upon two of them . . . or in plainer terms, he seizes a pint pot in each hand, and stretching his palms firmly over them, raises himself by degrees into an exact perpendicular, with his head downwards, and his feet in the air. Without returning to his feet, or planting them on the ground again . . . he absolutely perambulates, lifting up each hand and pint pot alternately, with the same motion as if they were hands and feet.

For his next act, again involving pint pots:

> He constructs a pillar of five of these pewter pots . . . about three feet in height; he then places his hand upon the top, and gradually raising himself upon that single support, he elevates his feet from the ground, until his feet, his head and his body are all in the same horizontal plane; and then . . . he strikes out with his feet and his disengaged arm in the manner of one who is swimming . . . In the course of his performances he mimicked the chattering and squeaking (rather of the monkey than the ape) and the mischievous grinning of his original, with hideous fidelity.

Gouffe had many imitators one of whom, a Signor Garcia, is illustrated in a playbill for *Jocko* at the Hertford Theatre in 1828 performing the same trick with pint pots as described above (Figure 7):

Theatre, Hertford,
Near the Folly Bridge.
On FRIDAY, APRIL 11th. 18
The Spectre Bridegroom
Or a Ghost in spite of himself.
Nicodemus, Mr. RUSSELL,.....Aldwinkle, Mr. COOK, ... Paul, Mr. P'
Dickory, MR. JENNISON, who has kindly undertaken that Character,
Captain Vauntington, Mr. J. PAUL.
Georgiana, MRS. J. PAUL.....Lavinia, MRS. RUSSELL.
"Hurrah for the Bonnets of Blue," by MRS. J. PAUL;
And the COSSACK DANCE, by MR. CHICKENI.
BLUE DEVILS.
Megrim, MR. RUSSEL,.....James, MR. PRYER,.....Denisou, OOK.
Annette, MRS. J. PAUL.
MR. USHER!
JUGGLERS.
CASARY CONCERT.
JOCKO,
THE BRAZILIAN APE,
Written expressly to introduce those surprising Feats of
SIGNOR GARCI
The celebrated MAN MONKEY, as Jocko,
Who will support himself horizontal on ONE HAND on the Top IVE PIN
placed on each other, forming a Pyramid, with a Boy on his back; he will also
support the weight of his body from a high column, raise a Boy from the
ground, suspend him by his teeth, and then place him upon his shoulders;
he will also place himself horizontally out on the Pole, &c.
Bamboe, MR. CHICKENI!
Who in the course of the Piece will introduce an admired PAS SEUL.
Henrico Fernandez, MR. J. PAUL,..... Marco. MR. COOK,..... Fabrealetta, MR. PRYER,
Padre, MR. ADDIS.....Slaves, Sailors, &c.
Mysa, MRS. J. PAUL,.....Lauretta, MRS. RUSSELL.
Stage Manager, MR. J. PAUL.
Doors to Open at half-past 6 o'clock, to begin at 7 precisely. Boxes, 3s.—Pit, 2s.—Gallery, 1s.
Half-Price at a Quarter before Nine.
TICKETS, and Places for the Boxes, may be had at the Theatre, from 10 till 4 o'clock, or at
St. Austin and Sons, Printers; where a Box plan may be seen.
Nights of Performance next Week,
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Figure 7. Playbill for performances at the Hertford Theatre on Friday 11 April 1828 illustrating Signor Garci(a) in *Jocko the Brazilian Ape*. In a common imitation of Gouffe's original routine, Garcia is shown balancing on pint pots with body extended horizontally. He also raises a boy from the ground suspended by his teeth, and then places him upon his shoulders, again copied from Gouffe. Hertford Museum, Hertford, UK (Catalogue Reference HETFM2563.1)

The *Cumberland Pacquet* 's description of Gouffe's exhibition proceeds to another (potentially dangerous) aspect of his display which involves the seating areas (gallery and boxes) for the audience, also alluded to in the *Selkirk & The Savage* playbill shown in Figure 6 earlier:

> At a subsequent period of the evening, he pretended to regard one of the stage-boxes with that sort of malign inquisitiveness that is so natural to the ape, and, making a sudden spring upon the exterior ledge of the box, he looked into it, to the almost fatal horror of a wandering dandy . . . He [then] darted off upon his astonishing race round the fronts of the boxes and gallery . . . this daring achievement he accomplishes with no other support for his feet than the narrow ledge that runs all round these fronts . . . In a little time he repeats this giddy race round the upper tier of boxes and the gallery . . . with more than cat-like agility and serpentine suppleness, terrifying some of the spectators, delighting others, and astonishing all.

After finishing with a detailed description of Gouffe's horizontal and perpendicular extension act, the *Cumberland Pacquet* concluded that his performance "certainly surpassed, as an exhibition of bodily power, anything, without exception, that we have ever witnessed". Gouffe also varied his balancing performances with a pole, as described in an advertisement for *The Island Ape* at the Theatre Royal, Dublin:

> [he] will balance himself with a boy on his back, by his foot upon the summit of a high pole, his body extended in a horizontal position, holding a boy in the air by one hand; he will also perform Tricks, Leaps, Balancings, Horizontal and and otherwise, and conclude by *running round the front of the Boxes, supported only by the moulding!!!* (*Dublin Evening Mail*, 29 March 1826: 2)

These original routines could and often did result in injury, but rarely death, which led to the premature demise of many such artists due to the unique rigours of the man-monkey line of business.[11] The routines were frequently copied and extended by other artists, and yet the single routine unique to this genre, and introduced by Gouffe, involved a far greater risk to life and limb. In the following section, Gouffe's so-called "hanging" routine is therefore considered is detail.

The Dangers of Hanging for Amusement

> M. Gouffe, of the Surrey Theatre, has announced his intention of hanging himself by the *neck*, for twenty minutes, on the night of Mr. Bryant's Benefit, which takes place tomorrow. – He should, *according to law*, hang an hour!
> (*Theatrical Observer*, 15 November 1825)[12]

> Mr. Bryant had a bumper last night – M. Gouffe absolutely suspended himself, by the neck, for nearly two minutes! The gallery rung with encore, but he merely wagged his tail and retired.
> (*Theatrical Observer*, 17 November 1825)

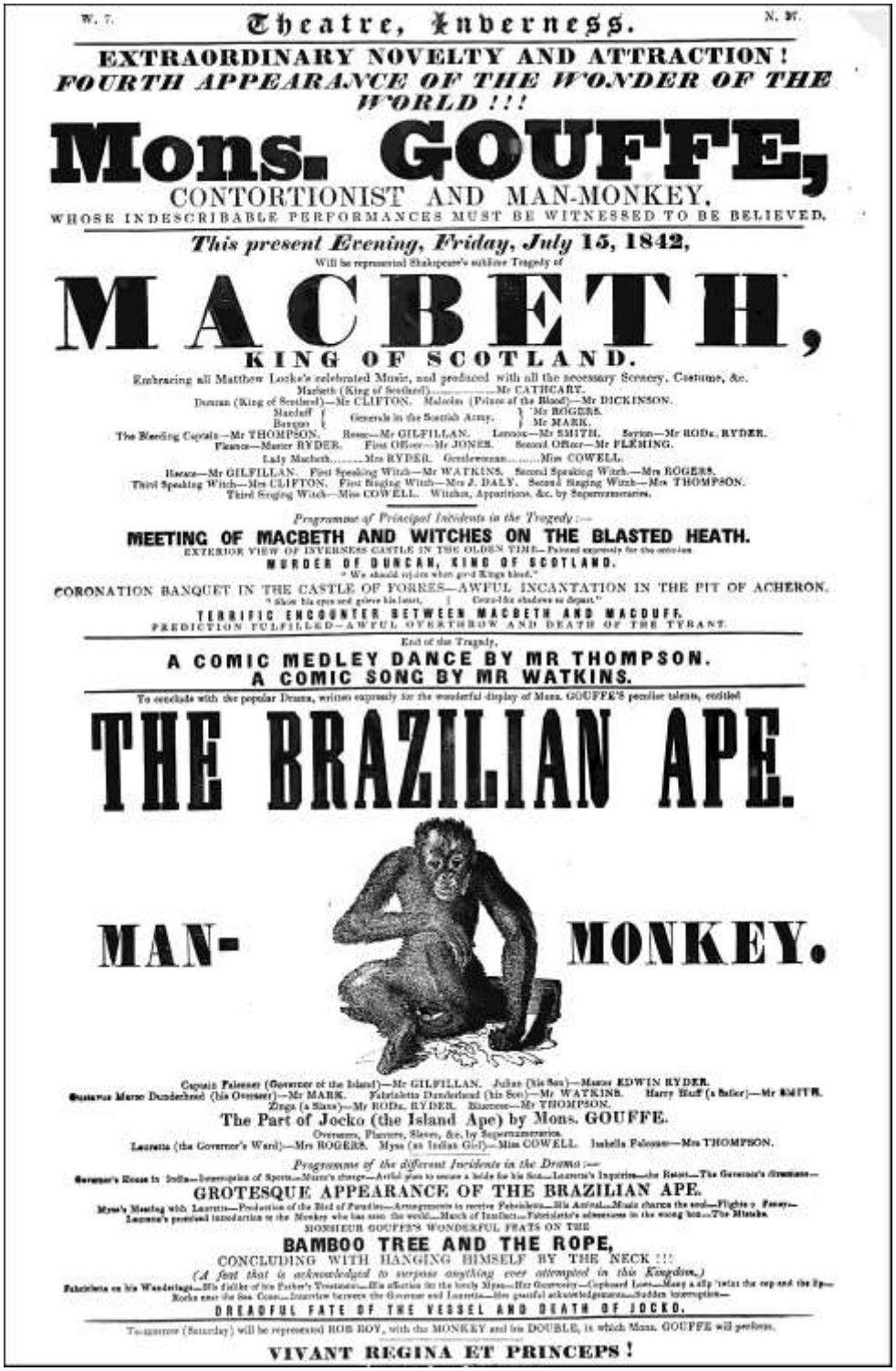
Gouffe was one of only two celebrities in his time known to have hung themselves for public amusement on a consistent and successful basis, or at least had first introduced the routine in their exhibition.[13] The other was an American stuntman named Sam Scott who died after diving from Waterloo Bridge while suspended from a rope around his neck (*Evening Chronicle*, 11 January 1841: 2). Seen surprisingly early in his performing career, Gouffe's spectacle of literally hanging himself by the neck was unique, but he also managed other tricks while suspended. It remains beyond normal comprehension how Gouffe developed the control necessary to remain apparently conscious throughout such routines (or managed to recover from unconsciousness to complete them), or indeed what gave him the idea in the first place. However, by adopting a high-risk strategy he established an unassailable niche for himself in what was rapidly to become a market overcrowded with man-monkey performers, including those purported to be Gouffe's successor. He was nevertheless taking huge risks in a routine that could prove potentially fatal if not executed correctly, and on at least five occasions his luck almost ran out.

Given the complex anatomy of the neck, and the physiological consequences of constriction of this region, it is unsurprising that Gouffe's exploits attracted the attention of medical practitioners. In this respect, three accounts - that make grim reading, being mostly

concerned with executions, suicides and homicides - have been located that refer to his hanging technique. The earliest and most valuable was published by Dr. W. D. Chowne in *The Lancet* in an article entitled "Case of Accidental Strangulation with Recovery". It is devoted almost exclusively to Gouffe and came out one year following his death. Further, and of especial significance, it was into Chowne's care that Gouffe was placed when admitted to Charing Cross Hospital on Monday 15 December 1845 under the name John Hornshaw aged forty-seven. Hornshaw alias Gouffe was "labouring under phthisis [pulmonary tuberculosis], and a collection of matter in the right cavity of the thorax", which conditions ultimately led to his death in hospital on Tuesday 10 February 1846. In *The Lancet*, Chowne described Gouffe as "a person of theatrical celebrity . . . remarkable for activity, great physical power, and skill in performing difficult and peculiar feats". His association with Gouffe placed him in a unique position to understand some of Gouffe's background, and how he developed the technique. It also incidentally, corroborates other accounts of how Gouffe started entertaining as a boy. Chowne notes:

> Amongst other feats, it was customary with him to exhibit himself hanging by the neck, trusting to a plan of managing his head, and the muscles of his neck and throat, so as to accomplish it with impunity. He informed me that when a boy he was very fond of tumbling and climbing, and commenced his career for gain while still a boy, by climbing and jumping about in public houses from the chairs and benches to the tables, window-ledges, chimney-pieces etc., as a monkey would . . . His health had been failing for some time when he came into the hospital, and he had been obliged gradually to give up his theatrical engagements . . . Such was his control over the muscles in his throat, that he could sustain not only the weight of his body, but great additions to it. Sometimes instead of weights, he has supported a man in his arms. The average time of his hanging was from ten to fifteen minutes. Like Scott, the American diver, however, he was not always successful in the adjustment of the rope, although happily he had the better fortune of timely rescue.

Chowne's article was subsequently referenced - and largely replicated - in two subsequent medical publications that were not specific to Gouffe's case. One was by Dr. Roger S. Tracy entitled "The Question of Pain in Hanging" (referring to Gouffe on page 351) and the other by Dr. E. W. Holmes entitled "Anatomy of Hanging" (referring to Gouffe on pages 110-11). It is sufficient to note that Chowne records (but without dates) three accidents suffered by Gouffe as a result of his hanging routine during which he lost consciousness. These occurred at Grantham, the City Theatre,[14] and the Victoria, the last being the worst incident of all. Two further such incidents have however been subsequently located, one at the Surrey in December 1825 (*Morning Advertiser*, 12 December 1825: 2), the other at Leicester in October 1827 where, "owing to a sudden jerk, the sling by which he was suspended slipped from its position, and when he reached the stage was so far exhausted as to cause the greatest alarm for his recovery" (*Northampton Mercury*, 20 October 1827: 2). Despite these dangers, Gouffe continued with his hanging routine into the 1840s, only several years before his death, as emphasised in a playbill from the Inverness Theatre of 1842, in which again may be seen the striking iconography used, and with Gouffe's name heading the bill before Shakespeare's *Macbeth* despite Jocko being the afterpiece (Figure 8).



W. T. Theatre, Inverness. N. B.

EXTRAORDINARY NOVELTY AND ATTRACTION!
FOURTH APPEARANCE OF THE WONDER OF THE WORLD !!!

Mons. GOUFFE,

CONTORTIONIST AND MAN-MONKEY,

WHOSE INDESCRIBABLE PERFORMANCES MUST BE WITNESSED TO BE BELIEVED.

This present Evening, Friday, July 15, 1842,

Will be represented Shakspeare's sublime Tragedy of

MACBETH,

KING OF SCOTLAND.

Embracing all Matthew Locke's celebrated Music, and produced with all the necessary Scenery, Costume, &c.

Macbeth (King of Scotland).....Mr CATHCART.
Duncan (King of Scotland)—Mr CLIFTON. Malcolm (Prince of the Blood)—Mr DICKINSON.
Macduff } Generals in the Scottish Army. } Mr ROGERS.
Banquo } Mr MARK.
The Bleeding Captain—Mr THOMPSON. Rosse—Mr GILFILLAN. Lennox—Mr SMITH. Seyton—Mr RODs. RYDER.
Fleance—Master RYDER. First Officer—Mr JONES. Second Officer—Mr FLEMING.
Lady Macbeth.....Mrs RYDER. Gentlewoman.....Miss COWELL.
Hecate—Mr GILFILLAN. First Speaking Witch—Mr WATKINS. Second Speaking Witch.—Mrs ROGERS.
Third Speaking Witch—Mrs CLIFTON. First Singing Witch—Mrs J. DALY. Second Singing Witch—Mrs THOMPSON.
Third Singing Witch—Miss COWELL. Witches, Apparitions, &c. by Supernumeraries.

Programme of Principal Incidents in the Tragedy:—

MEETING OF MACBETH AND WITCHES ON THE BLASTED HEATH.
EXTERIOR VIEW OF INVERNESS CASTLE IN THE OLDEN TIME—Painted expressly for the occasion
MURDER OF DUNCAN, KING OF SCOTLAND.
"We should rejoice when good Kings bleed."
CORONATION BANQUET IN THE CASTLE OF FORRES—AWFUL INCANTATION IN THE PIT OF ACHERON.
"Show his eyes and grieve his heart, } Come like shadows to depart."
TERRIFIC ENCOUNTER BETWEEN MACBETH AND MACDUFF.
PREDICTION FULFILLED—AWFUL OVERTHROW AND DEATH OF THE TYRANT.

End of the Tragedy,

A COMIC MEDLEY DANCE BY MR THOMPSON.
A COMIC SONG BY MR WATKINS.

To conclude with the popular Drama, written expressly for the wonderful display of Mons. GOUFFE'S peculiar talents, entitled

THE BRAZILIAN APE.

MAN-

MONKEY.

Captain Falconer (Governor of the Island)—Mr GILFILLAN. Julian (his Son)—Master EDWIN RYDER.
Gustavus Marco Dundenhead (his Overseer)—Mr MARK. Fabricletta Dundenhead (his Son)—Mr WATKINS. Harry Huff (a Sailor)—Mr SMITH.
Zinga (a Slave)—Mr RODs. RYDER. Blanco—Mr THOMPSON.
The Part of Jocko (the Island Ape) by Mons. GOUFFE.
Overseers, Planters, Slaves, &c. by Supernumeraries.
Lauretta (the Governor's Ward)—Mrs ROGERS. Myra (an Indian Girl)—Miss COWELL. Isabella Falconer—Mrs THOMPSON.

Programme of the different Incidents in the Drama:—

Governor's House in India—Interception of Sports—Mauro's charge—Artful plan to secure a bride for his Son—Lauretta's Inquiries—the Result—The Governor's threatens—
GROTESQUE APPEARANCE OF THE BRAZILIAN APE.
Myra's Meeting with Lauretta—Production of the Bird of Paradise—Arrangements to receive Fabricletta—His Arrival—Mauro charges the scene—Flights o Fancy—
Lauretta's promised introduction to the Monkey who has seen the world—March of Intellect—Fabricletta's uneasiness in the wrong box—The Mistake.
MONSIEUR GOUFFE'S WONDERFUL FEATS ON THE
BAMBOO TREE AND THE ROPE,
CONCLUDING WITH HANGING HIMSELF BY THE NECK !!!
(A feat that is acknowledged to surpass anything ever attempted in this Kingdom.)
Fabricletta on his Wanderings—His dislike of his Father's Treatment—His affection for the lovely Myra—Her Generosity—Captured Lost—Many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip—
Rocks near the Sea Coast—Interview between the Governor and Lauretta—Her grateful acknowledgments—Sudden interruption—
DREADFUL FATE OF THE VESSEL AND DEATH OF JOCKO.

To-morrow (Saturday) will be represented ROB ROY, with the MONKEY and his DOUBLE, in which Mons. GOUFFE will perform.

VIVANT REGINA ET PRINCEPS!

Figure 8. Playbill from the Inverness Theatre for 19 July 1842, depicting Gouffe as Jocko the Brazilian Ape. The playbill records valuable details of the different scenes, including Gouffe's demonstration and hanging routines. Reproduced courtesy of the Highland Archive Service (Catalogue Reference GB0232/D313).

Gouffe in summary, and some memories

Of all the surviving iconography that exists in playbills regarding this extraordinary performer, there is one, a lithographic print, unique in that it not only summarizes his major performances in a single image, but also offers the only glimpse in existence of his appearance out of a monkey suit as John Hornshaw, though in how true a likeness is impossible to say (Figure 9). Produced by the Pendleton's print studio of Boston, Massachusetts, dated circa 1832, it coincides with the years he performed in America. Gouffe is shown in the centre in a bust-length pose surrounded by seven of his most famous scenes. Given the earlier discussion, identification of the melodramas or demonstrations from which the depicted scenes are derived, are mostly self-explanatory; the horizontal and vertical extension acts, Jocko's dying scene, the young Fernand being protected by Jocko from the snake, and the hanging display (in this case, while waving two flags).

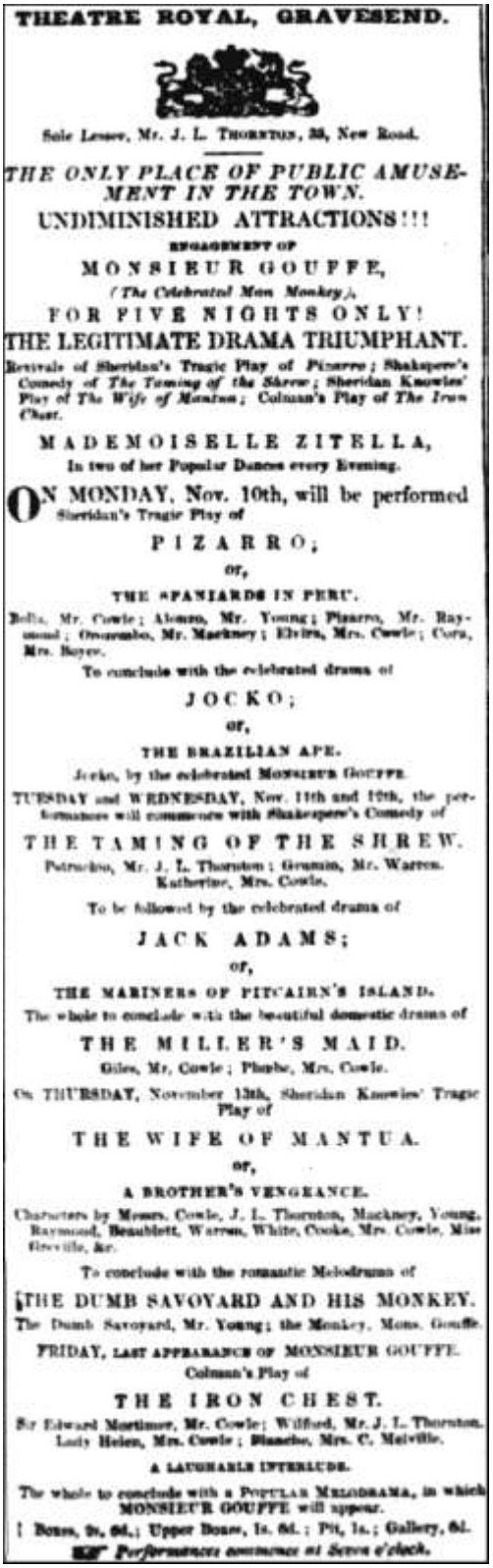
MONS. GOUFFE.
M. GOUFFE THE CELEBRATED MAN MONKEY AS JOCKO.
In his different characters as played by him in the principal Theatres in Europe & America.

Figure 9. Lithographic print from Pendleton's of Boston, Massachusetts (circa 1832) showing a bust-length portrait of Gouffe surrounded by scenes from some of his famous performances. Boston Athenaeum Digital Collections (Catalogue Reference C 5.4 Gou.(no.1).)

Closing the chapter on the "once-celebrated Gouffé", the *Era*, in a brief obituary that leaves much still to ponder about this unique individual, commented:

> His last appearance was some months back at Gravesend, when it was evident to all that his worldly career was fast drawing to an end. Though uninformed, he was honest, and, had he met with *honest* counsellors, would have been a rich man; but alas! Poor Gouffé was ever a prey to the designing. (15 February 1846: 6)

As alluded to in the above notice, Gouffe's final appearance was at the Theatre Royal, Gravesend, Kent during which (over five days from Monday 10th to Friday 14th November 1845) he enacted several of his most famous roles for the last time (Figure 10).



THEATRE ROYAL, GRAVESEND.

Sole Lessee, Mr. J. L. THORNTON, 38, New Road.

THE ONLY PLACE OF PUBLIC AMUSEMENT IN THE TOWN.

UNDIMINISHED ATTRACTIONS!!!

ENGAGEMENT OF

MONSIEUR GOUFFE,

(The Celebrated Man Monkey),

FOR FIVE NIGHTS ONLY!

THE LEGITIMATE DRAMA TRIUMPHANT.

Revivals of Sheridan's Tragic Play of *Pizarro*; Shakspere's Comedy of *The Taming of the Shrew*; Sheridan Knowles' Play of *The Wife of Mantua*; Colman's Play of *The Iron Chest*.

MADEMOISELLE ZITELLA,

In two of her Popular Dances every Evening.

ON MONDAY, Nov. 10th, will be performed Sheridan's Tragic Play of

PIZARRO;

or,

THE SPANIARDS IN PERU.

Rolla, Mr. Cowle; Alonzo, Mr. Young; Pizarro, Mr. Raymond; Orozembo, Mr. Mackney; Elvira, Mrs. Cowle; Cora, Mrs. Boyce.

To conclude with the celebrated drama of

JOCKO;

or,

THE BRAZILIAN APE.

Jocko, by the celebrated MONSIEUR GOUFFE.

TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY, Nov. 11th and 12th, the performances will commence with Shakespere's Comedy of

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

Petruchio, Mr. J. L. Thornton; Grumio, Mr. Warren. Katherine, Mrs. Cowle.

To be followed by the celebrated drama of

JACK ADAMS;

or,

THE MARINERS OF PITCAIRN'S ISLAND.

The whole to conclude with the beautiful domestic drama of

THE MILLER'S MAID.

Giles, Mr. Cowle; Phœbe, Mrs. Cowle.

On THURSDAY, November 13th, Sheridan Knowles' Tragic Play of

THE WIFE OF MANTUA.

or,

A BROTHER'S VENGEANCE.

Characters by Messrs. Cowle, J. L. Thornton, Mackney, Young, Raymond, Beaublett, Warren, White, Cooke, Mrs. Cowle, Miss Greville, &c.

To conclude with the romantic Melodrama of

THE DUMB SAVOYARD AND HIS MONKEY.

The Dumb Savoyard, Mr. Young; the Monkey, Mons. Gouffe.

FRIDAY, LAST APPEARANCE OF MONSIEUR GOUFFE.

Colman's Play of

THE IRON CHEST.

Sir Edward Mortimer, Mr. Cowle; Wilford, Mr. J. L. Thornton. Lady Helen, Mrs. Cowle; Blanche, Mrs. C. Melville.

A LAUGHABLE INTERLUDE.

The whole to conclude with a POPULAR MELODRAMA, in which MONSIEUR GOUFFE will appear.

Boxes, 2s. 6d.; Upper Boxes, 1s. 6d.; Pit, 1s.; Gallery, 6d.

☞ *Performances commence at Seven o'clock.*

Figure 10. Newspaper advertisement for Gouffe's final appearance at the Theatre Royal, Gravesend, shortly before his admission to hospital (*Kentish Independent*, 8 November 1845: 1). The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to The British Newspaper Archive.

Recalling Gouffe in *Jocko* and *The Island Ape* at the Theatre Royal, Derby some three decades after his death, a particularly fitting memorial came from the *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal* who remembered him as a:

> droll performer . . . one of the most wonderful and clever impersonators and imitators of "monkey tricks" . . . it was next to impossible to tell whether he was a man or beast. Dressed up in proper close-fitting hairy skin, with hands and feet to match, and with head and face monkeyish in every feature, he went through a series of performances in such a manner as would . . . show that man was not, as the Darwinian theory supposes, descended from a monkey, but that man and monkey were absolutely identical. (29 March 1878: 3)

Described in the memoirs of a notable comedian as "one who had shaken off his humanity, in which he had hitherto starved, and taken up the beast for a livelihood" (Raymond 341), this reassessment of Gouffe's career argues that the visual spectacle he introduced stemming from his supreme agility and range of actions (despite a minor physical abnormality), coupled with a proven dramatic ability, fully warrants his position among the elite of illegitimate artists of his genre, not only of his period, but of later periods also.

As I have stated previously "The period up to the mid-nineteenth century might justifiably be considered the golden age of the supreme posture-masters and ape impersonators" (366). But beyond Gouffe and his contemporaries, the innocence and pathos inspired by the Jocko cult all but disappeared after mid century with the rise of the music hall and its plethora of "monkey acts", and the increased frequency of "stock" appearances in pantomime. Fortunately however, the art of simian mimicry in the true spirit of Jocko was rescued towards the later nineteenth century by artists of the calibre of George Conquest, Charles Lauri junior, and Paul Martinetti, and into the twentieth century by the likes of Leon Dubois and Edward Sillward. In the broader context, I have also suggested that the genre has a contribution to make to other fields of Victorian studies. It thus offers a fruitful landscape

for not only further exploration of illegitimate celebrity, but also for contemporary interdisciplinary discourses regarding the relationship between performance, evolution, human-animal interactions, and visual culture in the long nineteenth century.

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Appendix

A Chronological List of Gouffe's Principal Appearances in Britain

Date	Title	Venue
04 July 1825	Jocko; or, the Ourang Outang of Brazil [a]	Surrey
18 Jul. 1825	Juan Fernandez; or, The Island Ape	Surrey
24 Dec. 1825	Crom-a-Boo; or, the Ape and the Infant*	Surrey
13 Feb. 1826	The Knight and his Page; or, the Ape of the Forest*	Surrey
27 Mar. 1826	The Isolate and the Ape [b]*	Surrey
29 Mar. 1826	The Island Ape	Dublin TR
05 Apr. 1826	The Knight and his Page; or, the Ape of the Forest*	Dublin TR
13 Apr. 1826	Jocko; or, the Ourang Outang of Brazil	Dublin TR
24 Apr. 1826	The Savage Lovers; or, The Rival Regicides*	Surrey
05 Oct. 1826	Perouse; or, the Desolate Island	Brighton TR
30 Dec. 1826	The Island Ape	Bristol TR
10 Sep. 1827	John Adams; or, the Mutineer and the Monkey	Coburg
06 Oct. 1827	Philip Quarll / The Island Ape / Jocko	Leicester
11 Apr 1828	Jocko, the Brazilian Ape	Hertford
16 Aug. 1828	The Ghost of Timothy Thady Mulligan, and the Monkey	Apollo Gardens, Yarmouth
20 Sep. 1828	The Devil and Doctor Faustus; or, Harlequin in Norwich (Gouffe as Pantaloon)	Pantheon, Norwich
19 Oct. 1829	The Forrest Robbers; or, the Dumb Boy and the Monkey of Arragon	West London

Date	Title	Venue
30 Nov. 1829	The Treacherous Black; or, the Monkey of the Wreck	Olympic
06 Jun. 1830?	Selkirk and the Savage; or, the Ape of the Cavern [c]	Sans Souci
30 Jan. 1830	Jack Robinson and his Monkey	Exeter TR
01 Mar. 1830	The Elf of the Flame; or, the Castle of Sunderwald	Coburg
22 Mar. 1830	The Baboon of Paraguay	Coburg
02 Apr. 1830	Easter Fair; or, the Monkey and the Murder	Coburg
03 May 1830	The Mandrill; or, The African Ape	Pavilion, Whitechapel
10 May 1830	The Shipwreck; or, the Ape of Brazil	Sadler's Wells
29 May 1830	Jack Robinson and his Monkey [d]	Sadler's Wells
15 Apr. 1831	The Lady's Monkey; or, The Lover's Escape / Selkirk and the Savage	Liver, Liverpool
28 Jun. 1831	Pitcairn's Island; or, the Mutineers of the Bounty	Coburg
1831 – 1835	(Gouffe performed in America during this period) [e]	
21 Jan. 1837	The Two Monkeys, or Life in Spain [f]	Liver, Liverpool
14 Feb. 1837	The Dumb Savoyard and his Monkey	Sheffield
09 Mar. 1837	The Two Monkeys; or, Jocko and his Son	Pavilion, Whitechapel
10 Aug. 1837	John Adams; or, the Mutineers of the Bounty [g]	Margate TR
20 Feb. 1838	John Adams and the Mutineers of the Bounty; or, Pitcairn's Island / The Ourang Outang and his Double; or, the Runaway Monkey	Belfast TR

Date	Title	Venue
16 Mar. 1838	The Rival Monkeys	Ryan's Royal Amphitheatre, Birmingham
19 Apr. 1838	The Web of Fate [h]	City of London
29 May 1839	The Lady's Monkey / The Gnome Fly	Ryan's Royal Circus, Wolverhampton
22 Aug. 1840	The Return of Perouse; or, Chimpanzee in Europe	Ryan's Royal Amphitheatre, Bristol
29 Aug. 1840	Jean Larotte; or, the Monkey, the Man, and the Maid	Ryan's Royal, Amphitheatre, Bristol
05 Sep. 1840	Pitcairn's Island; or, the Mutiny of the Seventeenth Century	Ryan's Royal Amphitheatre, Bristol
26 Sep. 1840	La Perouse! Or, Adventures on a Desolate Island	Ryan's Royal Amphitheatre, Bristol
22 Nov. 1841	Popineau and his Monkey	Theatre Royal, Abbey Street, Dublin
21 Apr. 1842	Perouse; or, The Monkey of the Desolate Island	Surrey
15 Jul. 1842	Jocko the Brazilian Ape	Inverness
18 Jul. 1842	The Ourang Outang; or, the Monkey and his Double	Inverness
25 Aug. 1842	"The Inimitable Professor of Animal Portraiture!"	Zoological Gardens, Liverpool
17 Sep. 1842	John Adams; or, The Monkey of Pitcairn's Island	Clonmel, Tipperary
30 Sep. 1842	The Return of Perouse and his Monkey Champanzee / "The Monkey who has seen the World" [j]	Cork TR
29 Dec. 1842	The Goblin King and the Elfin Nip; or, Harlequin and the Golden Goose	Theatre Royal, Abbey Street, Dublin

Date	Title	Venue
15 Apr. 1843	Jack Robinson the Sailor, and his Faithful Monkey	Edinburgh TR
25 Mar. 1844	The Nondescript of the East [k]	Cork TR
28 Mar. 1844	Jack Adams, or the Mutiny of the Bounty	Cork TR
08 Sep. 1844	The Return of Perouse; or, Chimpanzee in France	Pavilion, Whitechapel
23 Sep. 1844	Jocko / The Lady and the Monkey	Amphitheatre, Leicester
20 Oct. 1844	The Poland Ape; or, The Shipwrecked Mariner / The Sailor and his Monkey	Marylebone TR
17 Feb. 1845	Jocko, the Brazilian Ape	Victoria
20 May 1845	Jocko, the Brazilian Ape[m]	Portsmouth
11 Nov. 1845	Jocko / Jack Adams / The Dumb Savoyard[n]	Gravesend TR

Appendix Key: [*] Play credited to Charles Dibdin the Younger (see Nicoll 296); TR=Theatre Royal; [a] Mr Kirby played Jocko while Gouffe gave a demonstration as the Brazilian Ape (*London Morning Advertiser,* 4 July 1825); [b] Adapted from *Philip Quarll and his monkey Beaufidelle* (Speaight 153); [c] Laurence Senelick Collection (playbill) with approximate year; [d] Mrs Gouffe played Emmeline (her first appearance) to Gouffe's Mushapug (*London Morning Advertiser*, 29 May 1830); [e] Venues included the Park Street Theatre (New York), Bowery (New York), Chatham (New York), Washington Theatre (with wife), Camp Street Theatre (New Orleans), Tremont Theatre (Boston), Walnut Theatre (Philadelphia), Columbia Street Theatre (Cincinnati); [f] With the "Infant Gouffe" as Jackart to Gouffe's Baumell (*Liverpool Mail*, 21 January 1837); [g] Playbill (Stockwell 83); [h] Gouffe's infant son impersonated a Monkey and a Spider, Gouffe a Baboon and a Man-fly (*Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 22 April 1838); [j] Gouffe's final demonstration performances prior to his departure for Sidney (*Cork Examiner*, 30 September 1842); [k] Mrs Gouffe played Mysie to Gouffe's Nondescript (*Cork Examiner*, 25 March 1844); [m] Gouffe apparently went to America one week later (*Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 May 1845); [n] Gouffe's final appearance. (Note that titles shown in inverted commas are incidental demonstrations given by Gouffe.)

Notes

[1] Such acts are to be distinguished from those involving animal actors such as "General Jackoo" who was a monkey trained to perform as a rope-dancer, first appearing at Astley's in 1785 (*The Times*, 5 Apr 1785: 1).

[2] On the subject of identity, it is interesting to add that I have found only a single report of an attempt at fraudulent impersonation of Gouffe. In an advertisement for Gouffe's first appearance as Jocko at the Theatre Royal, Hull, the Manager assured his patrons that "A Person, last Summer, having been the source of considerable disappointment by assuming a similar name, and usurping the character of MONS. GOUFFE, Mr. Butler pledges his Honour, that the Person now introduced is the original Performer who excited universal astonishment in London" (*Hull Advertiser*, 22 May 1829: 2).

[3] It is known from Boyd's account that Gouffe apparently performed in the respective stock companies of both the Yeaman Shore Theatre and the Theatre Royal, Dundee, sometime between 1842 and 1843. Because more precise details are lacking, this phase is therefore not represented in the Appendix.

[4] Similar to Gouffe's noted difference in leg lengths, but a more extreme case, might be noted the American dwarf artist, "Sergio Hervio Nano" (Harvey Leach), a contemporary of Gouffe between 1828 and 1846, famous as the "Gnome Fly" but who also played many man-monkey roles (see also Stockwell 98-111). Gouffe also enacted a Gnome Fly, but seemingly only from the 1840s onwards, perfecting the technique of crawling along one side the theatre, across the ceiling (with his head pointing downwards!), and down the opposite side. See, for example, advertisement in the *Hampshire Chronicle*, 3 May 1841: 1.

[5] The earliest on record is *(De La) Perouse; or, the Desolate Island*, an "Historic Pantomime Drama" by John Fawcett (translated by Benjamin Thompson from the German of August von Kotzebue) and staged at Covent Garden, 1801) in which a Master Frederick Menage played the Ourang Outang, or "Little Wild Man of the Woods". For the early performance history of *Perouse* see Worrall (171-5).

[6] "Jocko" (sometimes "Jacko") is an epithet ultimately derived from a West African name for the chimpanzee (Forth 270).

[7] A good example in the late nineteenth century would be the great animal impersonator Charles Lauri Junior's performance as Chadi the monkey (who saves a child from a burning house) in the Indian pantomime ballet, *The Sioux*, first produced at the Alhambra on 12 October 1891 (*Era*, 17 October 1891: 16), and revived at intervals up to 1902 (Ince 367-8).

[8] Another playful monkey role example would be C. P. Thompson's melodrama, *The Dumb Savoyard and his Monkey,* first enacted by Gouffe at the Park Street Theatre, New York, in August 1831 (Brown 40) before several provincial performances in England. The first performance in Britain was at Drury Lane in 1828 with Master Wieland as Marmazette the monkey (*Morning Post*, 3 April 1828: 3).

[9] The original version was published in *The Englishman Gentleman*, and reproduced in *The Theatrical Observer* (16 November, 1825) as "The Age of Monkies; or, On and Off the Stage". The allusion to monkeys was also used to lampoon notable figures (with the threat of libel ever present) as illustrated in the satirical poem "The Age of Monkies, and The Monkies of the Age!" (*The Age*, 27 November 1825: 228-9).

[10] The year 1825 is pencilled on the back of the playbill (personal communication from Laurence Senelick), but the playbill proper merely shows the three performance days in June (without the year) which would have been a date immediately prior to Gouffe's first appearance at the Surrey in July 1825. However, the playbill text, introducing Gouffe's "extraordinary feats", clearly refers to an already seasoned artist rather than a mere novice suggesting that the event must have occurred at a later date. This fact is confirmed from Smythson's family tree entry by the Guild of One-Name Studies, and from the *Survey of London* for the Leicester Square/Place area which records that from 1808 to 1828 "the premises were occupied as a warehouse [and] in the early 1830s the theatre and shop appear to have been occupied by a Mr. Smythson, a dramatic agent and theatrical general factotum . . . [where] occasional benefit and other performances were given, the theatre being sometimes called the Sans Souci and sometimes the Vaudeville Subscription Theatre" (Sheppard 480-6).

[11] For example, Master (George) Wieland suffered a fall while performing the monkey in *The Dumb Savoyard* at Drury Lane, resulting in contusions of the head and shoulders, and two fractured ribs (*Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser*, 21 April 1828: 3).

[12] Gouffe performed at Mr. Bryant's Benefit in *The Island Ape* and hung himself "to oblige Mr. Bryant, for this night only" (*London Morning Advertiser*, 16 November 1825: 2).

[13] Plimmeri, referred to earlier, introduced a hanging routine as part of his slack rope performance at the Garrick a decade after Gouffe, but with near-fatal consequences (*Morning Post*, 8 June 1835: 7).

[14] Presumably the New City Theatre under John Kemble Chapman that existed at Cripplegate between 1831 and 1836 before its demolition (Nicoll 227). Given that Gouffe was in America for most of this period, if he did perform here then it must have been a brief appearance.